

## WAGES IN TOWN AND SCHOOL GOVERNMENT

Employee compensation is by far the greatest element of a town's costs. There have been sporadic conversations about the effect of wages on our budget, but never a public comprehensive look at how cash compensation has affected our budget over the years; and therefore, never a public comprehensive look at how cash compensation will affect our budget in the years to follow. Having the SB, Finance Committee, School Committee, Library Trustees, employees, Town Meeting and the public understand this issue is critical if we are to have rational conversations about budget cuts and revenue initiatives (including possible overrides) as we try to create a sustainable budget.

To understand whether compensation is reasonable, the main reference points are (1) historical comparisons, a perspective on which this data would provide; and (2) benchmark comparisons, an area significant work should be done in the future using outside consultants. However, the latter costs money and would be best done after getting a handle on historical data.

To actually get the data, it would be best to strive for simplicity. Therefore, I request that the SB, FinCom and BCG be provided with total dollar cash compensation and the FTE's, in order to calculate cash compensation per FTE by major employee group and in total.

I propose we obtain this data for each of the ten years from FY2000 to the FY2010 budget, and agree that the Town, Schools and Library provide actual budget data for the 2000-2008 period, and budgeted data for FY 2009 and 2010. I propose that the best presentational format would be thirty columns of data, consisting of Dollars, % increases and FTE's for each of the ten years from '00 to '10. The rows would be the various employee groups broken down into 3 areas: Town, Schools and Library. Here is an idea of how to further break down these areas, but I'm very open to suggestions:

### TOWN: [excluding Funds]

- 1) Administration/Department Heads
- 2) Administration/other
- 3) Collective bargaining units
- 4) Non Union

### Schools: (help me out here!)

- 1) Administration/Principals/Directors or Dept Heads
- 2) Administration/Supervisory/other
- 3) Teachers
- 4) Paraprofessionals/Specialists
- 5) Non teacher collective bargaining units
- 6) Other (non union, contracted)

### Library (help here as well)

- 1) Director
- 2) Administration/other
- 3) Collective bargaining units
- 4) other

I'm sending this out in preparation for the Select Board meeting of 3/9/09 and the BCG meeting that same day.

Thanks for your consideration and help,

Gerry Weiss  
Amherst Select Board

3/5/09